

VZCZCXYZ0004
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHUL #1491 1370147
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 170147Z MAY 07
FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4589
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2543
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 8445
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY 8060
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2653
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J2 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J3 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA J5 SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMUSKOREA SCJS SEOUL KOR PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC//OSD/ISA/EAP// PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 001491

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2017
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MCAP](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [KS](#)
SUBJECT: ROKG: NO LINKAGE FOR SMA FUNDS AND USFK RELOCATION

Classified By: Amb. Alexander Vershbow. Reasons 1.4 (b,d).

11. (C) Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs Shim Yoon-joe requested a meeting with the Ambassador to convey the ROKG response to the issues raised by Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Richard Lawless with ROK Ambassador Lee Tae-shik on May 8. Shim said that the ROKG appreciated Lawless's explanation of General Bell's statement before the April 24 Senate Armed Services Committee and understands that his comments do not represent a change in the U.S. position regarding the timetable for relocation of U.S. Forces in Korea (USFK). However, Shim said that the ROKG believes that the U.S. linkage of Special Measures Agreement (SMA) burdensharing funds and USFK relocation is not appropriate and could cause further misunderstandings of the U.S. position. Shim also took issue with Lawless's comment about the possible withdrawal of some United States forces unless there were an agreement on the use of SMA funds under the Land Partnership Program (LPP), noting that this was not helpful for either party. Shim stressed that the ROKG would expect close, prior consultation on any such decision.

12. (C) Shim emphasized that the ROKG intent was not to damage the framework of the burdensharing agreement with the United States, but to enhance transparency of the burdensharing mechanism, as requested by the National Assembly. Shim noted that there had been some misunderstandings about the use of SMA funds for USFK relocation "from the beginning." (Note: When the LPP Agreement was signed in 2002, there was an understanding reached between the U.S. and ROKG that some of the costs would be paid by the ROK, as specified in Appendix A. However, the ROKG never made public or explained this agreement to the NA. End Note.) Regarding the NA's Supplemental Opinion on the use of SMA funds, Shim said that the ROKG needs to respect the opinion of the NA, whether legally binding or not, because of the budgetary power exercised by the NA. Shim promised that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade would consult with the Embassy after discussing the issue further with the Ministry of National Defense.

13. (C) In response, the Ambassador reiterated that General Bell's comments reflect U.S. policy. It was not helpful for the ROK to single him out personally or attempt to drive a wedge between U.S. military and civilian spokesmen, since

there was no difference of view between them. The Ambassador noted that the U.S. understanding is that the Land Partnership Program agreement does not exclude the use of SMA funds, pointing out that the Appendix to the agreement spells out ROK responsibilities for specific facilities and installations associated with the relocation. The Ambassador stressed that while the United States respects the authority of the National Assembly, both governments had already reached a suitable agreement on how costs for USFK and 2ID relocation would be distributed, and that the U.S. expectation is that the ROKG will fulfill the provisions of the agreement.

VERSHBOW